DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 327 798 CG 023 102

AUTHOR Beall, Anne E.
TITLE How Emotional Are Males and Females around Others?
PUB DATE Aug 90
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (98th, Boston, MA, August 10-14, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Behavior; College Students; *Emotional Response; Higher Education; Interpersonal Relationship; Peer Influence; *Sex Differences

ABSTRACT

This study explored the effects of the presence of another person on males' and females' experience and expression of emotion. In either the presence or absence of a confederate experimenter, 33 female and 34 male college students were asked to select a teacher and student from their high school and then to give impersonal or personal information about each target person. Impersonal information consisted of topics such as the person's socioeconomic status, area of residence, and educational standards. For personal information, subjects discussed their current evaluation of the person and how the target person had affected them. Then subjects rated their experience of emotion: happiness, sadness, and emotional intensity felt toward the target people and evoked by the descriptions. In addition, 32 judges rated the expression of emotion conveyed in the verbal descriptions. The only effect found for reported emotion was a main effect for gender. Female subjects reported experiencing greater amounts of emotion than did male subjects. Judges' ratings showed that when subjects provided personal descriptions, males expressed the most emotion in the presence of a confederate experimenter and females expressed the most emotion when alone. The results of this study are interpreted in terms of differential male and female sensitivity to a non-interactive confederate experimenter. (Author/NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED327798

How Emotional are Males and Females around Others?

Anne E. Beall

Yale University

New Haven, Ct.

Abstract

This study explored the effects of the presence of another person on males' and females' experience and expression of emotion. Thirty-three females and 34 males gave impersonal and personal descriptions of target people either in the presence or absence of a confederate experimenter (CE). Then subjects rated their experience of emotion: happiness, sadness, and emotional intensity felt toward the target people and evoked by the descriptions. In addition, 32 judges rated the expression of emotion conveyed in the verbal descriptions. The only effect found for reported emotion was a main effect for gender. Female subjects reported experiencing greater amounts of emotion than did male subjects. Judges' ratings showed that when subjects provided personal descriptions, males expressed the most emotion in the presence of a CE and females expressed the most emotion when alone. The results of this study are interpreted in terms of differential male and female sensitivity to a non-interactive CE.

CG023102

Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston, Massachusetts, August 12, 1990.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Anne E. Beall

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

How Emotional are Males and Females around Others?

Most people believe that females are more emotional than males. When people are asked to name the most emotional person they know, a large majority name a woman (Shields, 1987). Numerous experiments appear to confirm this belief. Overt measures of emotion consistently reveal that females are more emotionally expressive than males (Buck, Miller, & Caul, 1974; Buck, Savin, Miller, & Caul, 1972; Gallagher & Shuntich, 1981; Schwartz, Brown, & Ahern, 1980).

Females may express more emotion than males because cultural display rules allow such expression in females, but not in males. If cultural display rules account for the variation in male and female expressivity, the two genders should react to the presence of another person in the culturally appropriate way. Some evidence does suggest that females are more expressive than males when in the presence of another individual (Cherulnik, 1979; Kleck et. al, 1976).

Another explanation for greater female expressiveness in the presence of others is that females may be more sensitive to social situations than are males and therefore they have greater emotional responses to them. Evidence shows that females are more sensitive to the non-verbal behavior of others than are males (Hall, 1984). Females also report that their emotion occurs more often in social settings than is the case for males (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Brandstatter, 1983).

This study attempted to address these two explanations for greater female expressiveness by exploring how the presence of another person affects the experience and expression of emotion. If emotional expression is the result of cultural display rules, females and males should express different amounts of emotion in the presence of another person, but should express similar amounts of emotion when alone. Subjects' self-reported experience emotion should not reflect these different social situations. However, if females are simply more responsive to social situations, they should show both greater emotional expression and reported

experience of emotion in the presence of another person. I hypothesize that verbal expression of emotion is due to cultural display rules.

Method

Subjects

Sixty-seven students (33 females & 34 males) participated in this study in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Design and Procedure

The study was a 2(subject gender: male vs. female) X 2(social situation: alone vs. with confederate experimenter (CE)) X 2(information: personal vs. impersonal) design.

Subjects were informed that the experiment was about education so that subjects would not become self-conscious about their emotion ratings and emotional expressions during the study. Subjects were instructed to select a teacher and student from their high school and then to give impersonal or personal information about each target person. An audio-tape recorded these descriptions.

Social Situation. The variable of social situation was manipulated by the presence or absence of a confederate experimenter (CE) when subjects gave their descriptions.

Information. Subjects were given instructions for the type of information they should discuss about each target person. For impersonal information, subjects were told to discuss topics like the person's socio-economic class, area of residence, and educational standards. For personal information, subjects were told to discuss their current evaluation of the person and how the target person had affected them.

Measures of Emotional Experience. Subjects rated how happy, sad, and emotional they felt when they thought about each description. Subjects also rated how happy, sad, and emotional they felt when they thought about each target person.

Measures of Emotional Expression. Subjects' verbal descriptions were

transcribed and given to a group of 16 female and 16 male judges who rated them for how emotional the subject appeared when he or she provided the description.

Results

The independent variables were **situation** (alone vs. with CE), subject **gender** (male vs. female), and **order** of task (impersonal then personal descriptions vs. personal then impersonal descriptions). **Information** (personal vs. impersonal) was a within subjects factor. Because this research was somewhat exploratory, separate ANOVA procedures were used even when the overall MANOVA was non-significant.

A MANOVA revealed that there was a significant main effect of gender on subjects' reported emotion (Males = 3.92, Females = 4.28; $F(1, 57) = 12.20$, $p < .0009$). On most ratings, females reported greater happiness, sadness, and emotional intensity than did males (See Table 1). A MANOVA revealed that there was a significant main effect of type of information (Impersonal = 4.16, Personal = 4.52; $F(1, 57) = 60.67$, $p < .0001$). Subjects reported greater emotion about their descriptions and target people after generating personal information than after generating impersonal information. There was no main effect for situation or order. Also, no effect of CE sex was obtained.

An ANOVA revealed that there was a gender by situation interaction for the amount of emotional intensity subjects felt about the target people when they gave impersonal information ($F(1, 57) = 4.98$, $p < .03$) and personal information ($F(1, 58) = 5.78$, $p < .02$). As shown in Figures 1 and 2, females reported feeling greater emotional intensity about the target people when alone than when with a CE, whereas males showed the opposite effect. A planned contrast revealed that when subjects gave impersonal information, males and females differed when they were alone ($F(1, 57) = 22.13$, $p < .001$), but not when they were in the presence of a CE ($F(1, 57) = 2.89$, ns.). Another planned contrast revealed that when subjects gave

personal information, males and females differed when they were alone ($F(1, 58) = 25.33$, $p < .001$), but not when they were with a CE ($F(1, 58) = 2.56$, ns.).

Judges' ratings of emotional expression showed that there was a gender by situation interaction for impersonal ($F(1, 57) = 10.53$, $p < .002$) and personal ($F(1, 59) = 9.9$, $p < .003$) descriptions. Judges reported that males and females expressed similar degrees of emotion when with a CE. However, males expressed more emotion than females in their **impersonal descriptions** when alone. Females expressed more emotion than males in their **personal descriptions** when alone.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the presence of another person had little effect on subjects' reported experience of emotion. The overall MANOVA did not reveal a main effect for situation on subjects' reported emotion. This study did show, however, that there was a main effect for gender on emotional experience, which was unexpected. Females reported greater emotion for every rating they made, but they primarily differed from males in their ratings of emotion for target people.

The major hypothesis about gender and experience of emotion in the presence or absence of others was confirmed. A MANOVA did not reveal an interaction between subject gender and social situation on reported emotion. Thus, overall, males and females did not report differential experience of emotion in the presence or absence of a CE. There was an interaction, however, for specific dependent variables. Females reported greater emotional intensity about target people when they were alone than when they were with a CE. Males reported similar amounts of emotion in these two conditions.

The interaction effects were carried by greater reporting of emotional intensity by females when they were alone. This finding was unexpected and could be due to the non-interactive nature of the social situation. Confederate experimenters only administered instructions and answered questions, and for

reasons of experimental control, were not allowed to freely interact with subjects. Because of females' sensitivity to non-verbal cues (Hall, 1984), female subjects may have been especially sensitive to the CE's lack of interaction with them during communication. In other words, the presence of a non-interactive CE may actually have inhibited their experience of emotion because they were not sure how to respond to this situation. Males, in contrast, may not have been as sensitive to this lack of interaction.

Judges' ratings showed males and females expressed similar amounts of emotions when with a CE. However, for impersonal descriptions, males expressed more emotion than females when they were alone. For personal descriptions, females expressed more emotion than males when they were alone. This finding is contrary to the original hypothesis and could also be due to the non-interactive nature of the social situation.

The results of this study did not confirm the original hypothesis that emotional expression is the result of cultural display rules and that males and females experience the same amount of emotion in different situations, but just choose whether or not to display it. Instead, females reported different degrees of emotion in different situations, and they expressed the most emotion when they were alone. Thus, males and females did not conform to social expectations about gender and emotionality, but may have interpreted the same situation differently. Females may have interpreted the situation as one that was inappropriate for emotional expression, whereas males may have had the opposite interpretation.

References

Allen, J. G. & Haccoun, D. M. (1976). Sex differences in emotionality: A multidimensional approach. Human Relations, 29, 711-722.

Brandstatter, H. (1983). Emotional responses to other persons in everyday life situations. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45, 871-883.

Buck, R., Miller, R. E., & Caul, W. F. (1974). Sex, personality, and physiological variables in the communication of affect via facial expression. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 30, 587-596.

Buck, R., Savin, V. J., Miller, R. E., & Caul, W. F. (1972) Communication of affect through facial expressions in humans. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 23, 362-371.

Cherulnik, P. D. (1979). Sex differences in the expression of emotion in a structured social encounter. Sex Roles, 5, 413-424.

Gallagher, D. & Shuntich, R. J. (1981). Encoding and decoding of nonverbal behavior through facial expressions. Journal of Research in Personality, 15, 241-252.

Hall, J. A. (1984). Nonverbal sex differences. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kleck, R. E., Vaughan, R. C., Cartwright-Smith, J., Vaughan, K. B., Colby, C. Z., & Lanzetta, J. T. (1976). Effects of being observed on expressive, subjective, and physiological responses to painful stimuli. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34, 1211-1218.

Schwartz, G. E., Brown, S. L., & Ahern, G. L. (1980). Facial muscle patterning and subjective experience during affective imagery: Sex differences. Psychophysiology, 17, 75-82.

Shields, S. A. (1987). Women, men, and the dilemma of emotion. In P. Shaver & C. Hendrick (Eds.), Sex and gender: Vol. 7. Review of personality and social psychology (pp. 229-250). Newbury Park, Ca: Sage Publications.

Table 1

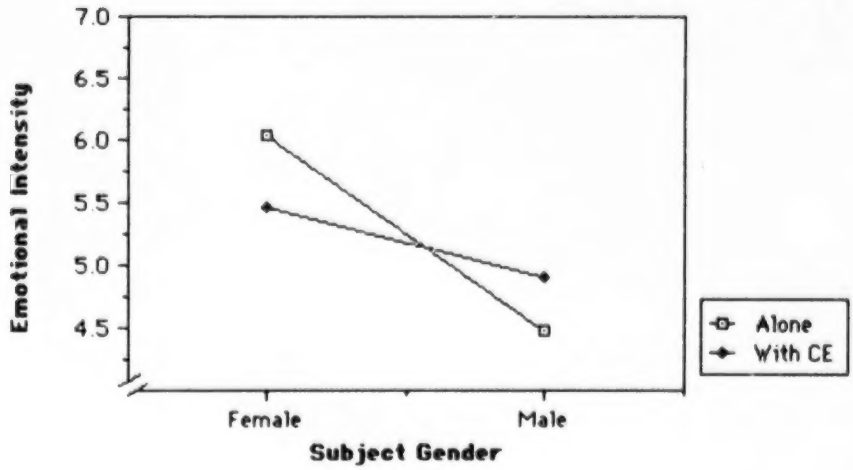
Gender Differences in Self-Reported Emotion

Measure of Emotion	Males	Females	F-value
After Providing Impersonal Information			
Happiness about Target	5.62	6.03	5.00*
Sad about Target	2.26	3.01	4.04*
Emotional Intensity about Target	4.71	5.72	22.33***
Happiness about Description	4.81	4.57	1.19
Sad about Description	2.84	2.75	.11
Emotional Intensity about Description	3.53	4.03	2.22
After Providing Personal Information			
Happiness about Target	5.57	6.12	10.43**
Sad about Target	2.31	2.95	.23
Emotional Intensity about Target	4.86	5.93	22.62***
Happiness about Description	5.31	5.71	3.44
Sad about Description	2.69	2.92	2.40
Emotional Intensity about Description	4.49	5.38	9.33**

* $p < .05$

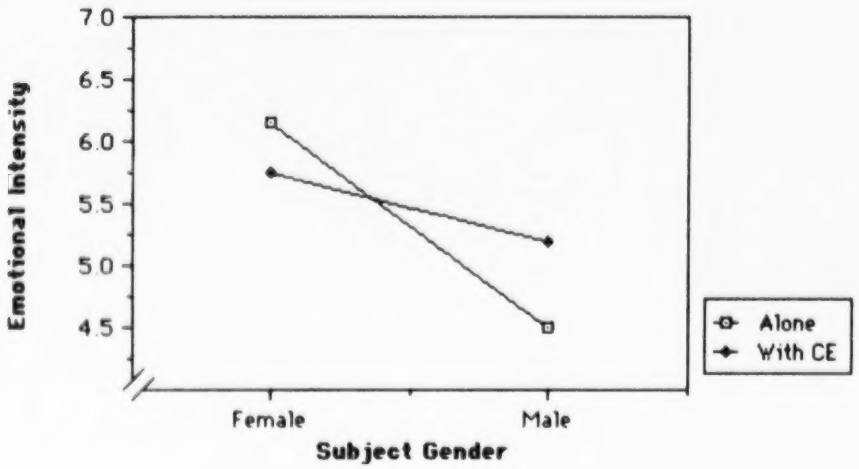
** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$



The original scale was from 1 to 7.

Figure 1. Emotional Intensity about Targets as a Function of Gender X Situation When Subjects Provided Impersonal Information about Targets.



The original scale was from 1 to 7.

Figure 2. Emotional Intensity about Targets as a Function of Gender X Situation when Subjects Provided Personal Information about Targets.